IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended): A surgical sponge comprising a plurality of radiopaque markers, each of said markers having an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$, wherein said radiopaque markers are disposed in a relationship that is substantially fixed both in spacing and in orientation.

2. (currently amended): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein each of said markers has an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$ for x-rays incident on said target in any direction.

3. (original): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein said x-ray density is equivalent to at least about 0.2 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$.

4. (original): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 2, wherein said x-ray density is equivalent to at least about 0.2 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$.

5. (currently amended): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein each of said markers has an area of at least 5 mm^2 in at least one projection.

6. (currently amended): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 5, wherein each of said markers has an area of at least 5 mm^2 in any projection.

7. (currently amended): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein each of said markers produces an x-ray image having a distinctive, visually recognizable shape.

8. (currently amended): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein each of said plurality of radiopaque markers ~~said shape~~ is ~~at least one member~~ selected

from the group consisting of ovals, polygons, astroids, epicycloids, lobed shapes, alphabetic and numeric characters, and dingbats.

9. (currently amended): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 7, wherein at least one of said markers ~~comprises at least one~~is a substantially spherical component having an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$.

10. (currently amended): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 8, wherein each of said markers has an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$ for x-rays incident on said target in any direction.

11. (original): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, further comprising a remotely detectable electronic article surveillance tag.

12. (cancelled)

13. (currently amended): A method of detecting a surgical sponge within a surgical patient, said surgical sponge comprising a plurality of radiopaque markers, each of said markers having an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$, wherein said radiopaque markers are disposed in a relationship that is substantially fixed both in spacing and in orientation, and said method comprising the steps of: (a) obtaining at least one x-ray of at least a portion of said patient likely to contain said radiopaque markers; and (b) examining said x-ray to detect and locate an image of said sponge.

14. (currently amended): A method of detecting a surgical sponge within a surgical patient and treating ~~a~~ said surgical patient, said surgical sponge comprising a plurality of radiopaque markers, each of said markers having an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of BaSO4, wherein said radiopaque markers

are disposed in a relationship that is substantially fixed both in spacing and in orientation, and said method comprising the steps of: (a) obtaining at least one x-ray of at least a portion of said patient likely to contain said radiopaque markers; (b) examining said x-ray to detect and locate an image of said sponge; and (c) carrying out a surgical procedure to remove said sponge from said patient.

15. (new): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 9, wherein all of said markers are substantially spherical.

16. (new): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 15, wherein said surgical sponge comprises three substantially spherical markers, said markers being closely grouped to one another.